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New York

President: Mr. Gurirab . . . . . (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 99

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

(h) Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

Draft resolution (A/54/L.18)

The President: This morning the General Assembly, in accordance with the decision taken at its 3rd plenary meeting on 17 September 1999, is holding the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund.

Statement by the President

The President: We are here today to register the many successes achieved in the field of population and development policies of States and the contributions made by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) since its establishment in 1969.

In the 30 years of UNFPA's work, countries have made appreciable progress in understanding population issues and in undertaking measures to find solutions. This is the result of the unstinting labour of thousands of women and men all over the world, especially in the developing countries. These people have worked tirelessly to improve health care, raise educational standards, especially of rural women and girls, and introduce population and development policies. Their efforts have reduced the toll of poor health and improved the quality of life for the people.

Better health and education mean more and wider choices. Everyone has the right to reproductive health, and today more and more people are able to exercise this right. This in turn will result in smaller families and slower population growth. Health education and population policies are now effectively included in public policy discussions and development plans.

The historic 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development was a watershed and a pathfinder for a new approach. The gathering itself was unprecedented, while the decisions and the final Programme of Action opened up new opportunities for integrated development strategies for Governments and citizens of the world. This commitment to the Cairo Programme of Action was further illustrated at the General Assembly's special session in June last, when, after five years of action, 185 countries reaffirmed their support for the Cairo decisions and added new benchmarks for its continued implementation.

The focus of population challenges has shifted from controversy to consensus in the span of UNFPA's 30 years. The Fund's practical contribution is visible in many parts of the world. It is helping to build integrated

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reproductive health programmes, enlarge partnerships and promote full recognition of women's rights and their contribution to development. Women have asserted themselves into the mainstream of development, and their voices are being heard as never before in the corridors of government and business, in professions and in other key areas of human activity. These are all important achievements, and they are due to UNFPA's leadership and initiatives. UNFPA has worked hard to ensure that its programmes and projects become locally owned and managed by the beneficiaries themselves. Working closely with Governments, parliaments and non-governmental organizations, UNFPA has developed a workable relationship of trust and mutual cooperation. With the passage of time, population management has become widely accepted as an element in development planning. The sharing of experiences and mutual support have further enhanced UNFPA's activities.

Recent national and international events marking the day on which the 6 billionth human being was born on planet Earth illustrated that the international community is today concerned not merely with numbers but with individual human lives in trying to balance population growth with economic growth. This is in line with the message of the 1994 Cairo Conference that population issues and development strategies affect equally individual, national and global interests. Today, it is possible to acknowledge population growth as a factor influencing development. Moreover, countries can deal with population increase, together with matching demographic issues, such as migration and ageing, as part of an integrated population policy. Countries can now give due priority, in all aspects of their development policy, to reproductive health care, including family planning, as part of an integrated health-care system; to education for women and girls, as part of an integrated education service; and to gender issues.

Today countries can allocate the needed resources to these and other aspects of social development without risking public criticism for misappropriating funds and resources. At the same time, international institutions are now beginning to understand better the role of health, education and gender factors in national development and are prepared to support them. Today we have a clear idea of what our social development goals are and what it will take in the form of national and international resources to achieve them.

On the question of resources, it is important to recognize those private foundations which have given so generously to promote international population and development goals. In this context, major corporations have recently made significant contributions or have pledged to do so. We commend them for this and urge others to emulate their wonderful example.

Ms. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of UNFPA, has earned a global reputation as an untiring crusader for international understanding of and support for population issues, particularly as regards gender equality. She is known for her strong views and her forthright way of expressing them. At the same time, she has earned respect and admiration as a diplomat and a consensus builder. This is the kind of leadership that the international community must demonstrate in tackling the social issues on UNFPA's agenda. In doing so, it must ensure that such efforts do not ignore respect for the human rights of all the world's 6 billion people, as well as the national interests of States.

I now give the floor to Ms. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, to deliver a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General.

Ms. Sadik (United Nations Population Fund): I am very honoured to read the following message from the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

> "Thirty years ago, my predecessor, U Thant, transferred a small trust fund to the United Nations Development Programme. A small group of donors provided a small amount of money for the new fund's operations. Such were the modest beginnings of what we know we today as the United Nations Population Fund — one of the leading success stories of the United Nations of the last half century.
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> "Many here will recall how delicate and sensitive population issues were in the 1960s. It was hard to agree even on a basis for discussion. Of course, the United Nations Population Division had been in existence since 1945. But there was great controversy over whether the United Nations should take a leading part in action on population, and if so, what it should do.
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> "Controversy may have abated only somewhat since then, but 30 years have also brought a long record of achievement. That success has been built on three pillars: good information, good

programmes and good understanding. When UNFPA started work, most developing countries had only rudimentary systems for collecting and analysing population data as a basis for policy. UNFPA has worked with the Population Division and with the Statistical Unit of the United Nations to build national statistical offices, take censuses, make projections and disseminate reliable data. This has meant significant increases in national capacities to plan ahead, to incorporate population policies into development planning and to take sound economic and social decisions.

"UNFPA has also been a close partner in helping developing countries put in place effective programmes for voluntary family planning and integrated reproductive health programmes. When coupled with economic growth, improved education for women and girls and other factors, the result has been a decline in the average number of children per family from six to three during the 30 years of UNFPA's efforts. This in turn has meant better care for children; more choices for women; decreased pressure on the environment; slower, more balanced population growth; and better living standards in general.

"And then, of course, there was the breakthrough at Cairo: the historic consensus reached at the International Conference on Population and Development five years ago on the global need for slower population growth overall, on the national right to sovereign decision-making and on the individual right to reproductive health. The special session of the General Assembly just four months ago showed that Member States remain committed to the Cairo Programme of Action. We must build on this political will.

"The success of UNFPA is also a success for the United Nations process: the painstaking work of debating proposals, airing differences and, finally, achieving political consensus. This is the harmonizing role of the United Nations as envisaged in its founding Charter. Combined with our operational programmes, it is the path of real progress.

"All Member States, and all parts of the United Nations system, have contributed. UNFPA has been very effective in forming alliances within and outside the United Nations system; this has led to greater cohesion and better use of resources. UNFPA was also quick to realize the indispensable role of civil society, and has worked closely with non-governmental organizations, north and south, as well as with the private sector.

"I wish I could say that all problems have been solved, but you know as well as I do that there is one area where performance has been lacking. If we could mobilize the resources envisaged at Cairo, we would be in a much better position to attain the progress we seek.

"Life would be unrecognizable without difficulties to overcome. So we shall continue our work on an issue that has individual, national and global repercussions. We shall persist in our struggle for the development of nations and the human rights of people. And we shall continue looking to UNFPA for its renowned leadership, advocacy and programmes.

"In that spirit, I would like to salute UNFPA, its dynamic Executive Director, Dr. Nafis Sadik, her predecessor, the late Rafael Salas, and UNFPA staff all over the world for the great service they have rendered humankind."

The President: I call now on the representative of Burkina Faso, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly's consideration of agenda item 99 (h), "Sustainable development and international economic cooperation: implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development", gives us this opportunity to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In the life of an undertaking or a programme, 30 years is the age of full maturity. This means we must look back not only to assess what progress has been achieved, but also to see whether all the efforts, all the work, have lived up to our expectations and have achieved the results for which we had hoped.

We believe that on the whole the record of UNFPA is a positive one, even if diverse obstacles and constraints have sometimes hampered progress, complicated efforts and even given rise to doubt.

With respect to Africa, the challenges seem enormous, starting with the very issues involved. Africa is the continent where controlling population growth has posed the most daunting challenge, for many reasons from psychological resistance to a lack of acceptance of family-planning methods. The result is that uncontrollable and uncontrolled population growth constantly challenges economic projections and thus thwarts all our efforts. The United Nations has signalled the overriding importance of population and its impact on the promotion of sustainable development in Africa by including it as a priority area in the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa.

Moreover, the world economic situation itself is not conducive to investment in social areas, to the point where a prominent United Nations economist has said that this century is ending with a crisis of development — and, we might well add, with a crisis of international solidarity. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has recently reported that, in 1998, countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development saved $60 billion by paying less for commodities. Of course, that sum, levied on the poor, exceeds what the rich nations spend on official development assistance.

In addition to these more or less external factors, there are also purely African internal considerations, such as inter-State and inter-ethnic conflict; in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1998/318), the Secretary-General stressed the harmful effect of this on African development. Other factors include: low levels of education; the still excessive marginalization of the most underprivileged groups, such as women; meagre progress in democracy; underemployment of young people, who nonetheless constitute a most valuable workforce; refugee flows; along with other factors.

These negative considerations only put UNFPA's performance in greater relief, since despite these pitfalls the Fund has for 30 years been playing an irreplaceable role in providing technical and financial assistance in many areas, in addition to its advocacy work. Above all, UNFPA has been mandated by the United Nations to follow up the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in 53 African countries, in cooperation with the operational system of the United Nations, regional institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society, *et cetera*. In cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa, UNFPA has the responsibility of reviewing what has been achieved with respect to adolescent reproductive health, the advancement of women, partnership with civil society and problems such as economic difficulties, lack of qualified personnel and the ineffectiveness of advocacy strategies. It continues to help many African States to define and formulate their national population policies and strategies, and sometimes to revise them, in particular to take account of goals recommended by the International Conference on Population and Development.

These achievements have been made possible thanks to technical assistance teams at Dakar, Addis Ababa and Harare, and thanks also to the regional training institutes that have helped most of these countries in national capacity-building with a view to implementing their population and development policies.

Similarly, UNFPA supports the activities of regional and subregional organizations in this sphere. In cooperation with the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, UNFPA has helped in creating an information-management system to monitor maternal mortality, the use of contraception and the implementation of population and migration programmes in the sub-Sahel region. In cooperation with the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Fund has also been engaged in preparatory work for the census planned for 2001 in the 14 countries members of the Community.

The great progress made is illustrated by achievements including: the adoption of laws against female genital mutilation in countries such as Ghana, Togo, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Burkina Faso; the implementation in many countries of new health policies relating particularly to reproductive health for young people and adolescents; and the promotion of women's rights, in particular to combat discrimination and violence. Here, we should stress that UNFPA has set up an African women's network, the goal of which is to promote implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action. Members of this group, who meet every two years, have become important allies in promoting reproductive health rights, gender equality and for the mobilization of resources to implement national population programmes. The Fund furthermore supports the Forum of African and Arab Parliamentarians on population and development. Finally, among UNFPA's achievements we must highlight its activities in raising awareness, in particular about HIV/AIDS prevention.

Thirty-seven African countries out of 61 group-A countries still need UNFPA to attain the goals of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. For a long time to come, UNFPA will be essential to our continent, which is eloquent testimony to its usefulness and, above all, of its effectiveness. This is why we urgently appeal to beneficiary countries, to donors and to the entire international community to increase financial resources for the Fund so that it can properly and effectively discharge its mission.

If this appeal is heeded, it will be the best gift that we can offer to Ms. Nafis Sadik and her associates, to whom we pay sincere tribute for the high quality of the work they have done and to whom we would like to say "happy birthday".

The President: I now call on the representative of Uzbekistan, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan): Today we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). I would like to take this excellent opportunity to express my gratitude to Ms. Nafis Sadik, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, for her tireless efforts and for her broad insight into the process of solving problems of population.

The history of the creation of the Fund has deep and strong roots in the United Nations system. For the past three decades the discussion of problems of population has become an inalienable part of the global dialogue on issues of economic and social development. In each country, it has become a part of the process of formulating political decisions in the field of planning. Issues of assistance to States and the creation of development strategy in the field of population have been incorporated in the Fund's functions and tasks since the moment of its creation in 1969.

It is necessary to note that enormous changes have taken place since the end of 1960s: for instance, significant growth in the scale of assistance for childbirth and a sharp reduction in population growth rates, the level of birth rates and the size of families. The success over the three previous decades has been a result of the political will of nations, international information activities, and the joint and coordinated efforts of countries and donors, as well as of the UNFPA and other United Nations agencies.

I wish also to note the innovative approach of the Fund, including its search for new aspects of cooperation in the field of development and the attraction of financial support from non-governmental sources. This should, undoubtedly, serve as a model for other international organizations.

Over the past three decades, Governments of a number of countries have managed, thanks in most cases to the active assistance of the Fund, to lower the parameters of child and maternal death, to improve indicators of life expectancy and to increase the number of children attending elementary and high schools.

The Programme of Action adopted by consensus at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo, has become a significant event in a history of the international community.

During the process of implementation of the Programme of Action, countries members of the Asian Group have carried out and continue to carry out efforts to improve their policies and programmes in the field of population and development, consistent with the provisions of the Programme and in view of their particular demographic, socio-economic and political situations. It is worth mentioning that since the day of the approval of the Programme of Action, Asian countries have always maintained a political adherence to the goals of the Programme.

It is necessary to note that financial and economic shocks, natural disasters and local wars and conflicts create obstacles in the process of achieving the objectives of the Programme of Action. It is widely recognized that safe maternity is both a factor for development and an imperative factor for the protection of human rights. Rates of maternal and child death in some countries of the Asian region, however, remain high due to the adverse economic situation of women, the absence of access to maternity services and insufficient access to services for the protection of reproductive health and for family planning.

Countries of the region are also concerned by the expansion of the practice of smuggling migrants, especially women and children, who are exposed to violence, to compulsory work and to sexual exploitation. The assistance of the UNFPA appears to be most valuable for completing the long and difficult process of solving problems, as well as in reviewing previous

programmes and projects of the Fund and developing new ones within the framework of ICPD + 5. Establishment of mechanisms for partnership of the Fund with other relevant bodies of the United Nations system and international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations has become an important achievement of the Fund.

Countries members of the Asian Group welcome the positive contribution made by the United Nations Population Fund and its personnel over the years to solving problems of population and development, and we congratulate the Fund and its staff on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of its operations and wish them further success in the achievement of the tasks before them.

In conclusion, allow me to recall that the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund coincides with two remarkable events: the approach of a new millennium and the birth of the 6 billionth citizen of our planet. The symbolic and joyful concurrence of events should encourage all of us to make more active and effective efforts to ensure that current and future generations will enjoy a brighter future, free from the current problems challenging the international community.

The President: I now call on the representative of Bulgaria, who will speak on behalf of the Eastern European States.

Mr. Sotirov (Bulgaria): It is truly a privilege to speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States on this significant occasion: the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The last year of the twentieth century is a special year for population issues. In July the General Assembly held its special session for the review and appraisal of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. On 12 October the 6 billionth citizen of our planet was born. Today we are marking the thirtieth anniversary of the creation of UNFPA.

Despite the limited funds made available to it, UNFPA is now an international development agency with a broad mandate: to raise awareness of population issues throughout the world and, especially, to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition in solving their population problems.

Under the leadership of Ms. Nafis Sadik the United Nations Population Fund has become the undisputed international leader in the population field, leading the drive towards the goals agreed at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994. We believe that the key to UNFPA's success is its careful attention and quick response to national needs and priorities, as well as its close working relationships with Governments and civil society.

Since it became operational the United Nations Population Fund has had a profound effect on national attitudes towards population issues, helping bring population issues into the mainstream of development policy. Governments are increasingly integrating sectoral development efforts, forming permanent inter-agency development teams that work consistently together. This approach has been extended to international assistance: many countries have established mechanisms to avoid duplication and promote rational use of resources. UNFPA's approach has also promoted cooperation at the country level within the United Nations system.

Activities and programmes at the regional level, in particular in the Eastern European region, have demonstrated the efficiency of UNFPA's operations. We hope that the United Nations Population Fund will continue to render strong support to the endeavours of the Governments of the region to solve the specific population problems.

At the international level, UNFPA has helped promote understanding and awareness on what needs to be done in the field of population and development. Devising an appropriate population policy is now accepted globally as part of a sound development strategy and is increasingly seen to be part of the foundation of sustainable development.

Although much remains to be done, UNFPA's success speaks for itself. Nearly 60 per cent of women in developing countries now have access to reproductive health services, including family planning. As a result, fertility is falling and population growth rates are slowing in all parts of the developing world.

Now, on the verge of a new millennium, the United Nations Population Fund is in the process of updating its programmes to reflect the new international consensus on reproductive health, women's empowerment and education. We hope that UNFPA will continue successfully to revitalize itself in order to become a

model international institution. We wish it a happy anniversary.

The President: I now call on the representative of Peru, who will speak on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean States.

Mr. Picasso (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Peruvian delegation, on behalf of the Group of Latin America and Caribbean States, would like to hail and recognize the United Nations Population Fund's successful first 30 years of existence.

Three decades ago the international community had only a nascent understanding of population issues and of the effect of these issues on the welfare of individuals. Thus, it is important to note that the Population Fund performed an educational and at the same time enlightening role by promoting the subject of population as a multidimensional issue and, consequently, by emphasizing the need to deal with these issues from several angles.

In 1994 the international community defined a programme of action that was based on a broad international consensus. The Cairo Programme of Action emphasizes the need to assign priority to improving the quality of life and well-being of the population of the world; promoting human development in order to eliminate poverty; supporting sustained economic growth within the framework of sustainable development; ensuring access to education, particularly for girls; promoting gender equality and equity; reducing infant and maternal mortality; reproductive health services; the search for sustainable production and consumption patterns; and the development of human resources. All of these efforts were to be undertaken within a framework of respect for human rights.

The five-year review of the Cairo Programme of Action was successfully concluded with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The Latin American and Caribbean States participated actively in this process and are deeply satisfied with the outcome of the review. They have also embarked on a study of the recommendations in order to implement them.

The countries of our region are undoubtedly now in good shape to implement the Cairo agreements. Observing the events of the past century from a historical perspective, all delegations present here will agree that important progress has been made in the living conditions of most countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region. Significant social and economic transformations have produced relatively sustained rates of economic growth and some improvement in the well-being of individuals and the delivery of basic social services. Moreover, the sustained access of the population to education and the incorporation of women into the labour market have led to marked changes in family patterns.

Most programmes in our countries acknowledge institutional reinforcement and the decentralization of their services as a priority measure in the application of reproductive health services. Many countries have incorporated new actors, acknowledging the work of non-governmental organizations, particularly those for women and young people, and the rest of civil society. There has also been recognition of the new principles on reproductive rights outlined in Cairo and of the need to supply access to quality services.

The various levels of poverty include ethnic and gender differences, which are also reflected in limited access to basic health and education services. The indicators reflect the reality of life for women. Fifty per cent of Latin American and Caribbean women have suffered some kind of domestic violence; fewer than 50 per cent of births in the Central American and Andean area countries are attended by trained personnel; maternal mortality rates remain high within the region, pointing to marked social, economic and gender inequalities that persist within the region.

The situation of our youth is also worrying. In some countries, adolescents make up more than 50 per cent of the total population. One third of all girls under the age of 20 have already had their first child; they are thus unable to finish their schooling or obtain adequate training and are doomed to the perpetuation of their social condition and to seriously restricted opportunities for development. In reality, many youthful pregnancies occur as a reaction to the reality of unemployment and the limited economic opportunities for individual progress. It is obvious that teenagers need special care commensurate with their needs.

There is a clear commitment in Latin America and the Caribbean to continued implementation of the resolutions adopted at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. The achievements made to date prove that the financing of programmes within the region has concrete results, since they have produced a context of greater political and economic stability than in the previous decades.

Although these achievements have been meaningful, it is important to emphasize that the Latin American and Caribbean situation requires the sustained technical and economic support of the international community. We therefore take this opportunity to acknowledge and commend the work of the Population Fund, as well as that of the international donor community. In this same conviction, we repeat our request for increased support from the donors for the region generally and for population affairs specifically.

Within this framework, it is important to support and to be able to count on the cooperation of the Population Fund, so that it may continue to work with regional Governments and civil society, in accordance with its mandate, and to improve the quality of life of our peoples, particularly women, adolescents and young girls.

We are convinced that, in the twenty-first century, the United Nations Population Fund will continue actively to exercise its role in making the Cairo Programme of Action a reality. We in the Latin American and Caribbean region wish it the greatest success and pledge to continue to strengthen its links of cooperation with our countries. In this way, we may one day be able to claim in full satisfaction that every family lives in an environment that is conducive to its well-being and development and enables it to freely organize its own living conditions in accordance with its perceptions and individual situation, within a framework of equity and equality for women and men and in full respect for human rights.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Italy, who will speak on behalf of the Western European and Other States Group.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): 12 October 1999 marked the crossing of a major threshold in human history: the birth of the world's six billionth child. This extraordinary moment compels us to reflect on the remarkable growth of the world's population and on the collective responsibility of the international community in seeking to stabilize this phenomenon. For the past 30 years — and, I am sure, for many more in the future — we have been and will be able to count on the most invaluable work of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which has always remained in the forefront on issues related to the field of population. On this special occasion, it is my privilege to speak on behalf of the Western European and Other States Group, which wants to express its profound appreciation for the Fund's mission and achievements.

UNFPA was established in 1967 as the United Nations Trust Fund for Population Activities. By the time of the 1974 World Population Conference in Bucharest, it was already acting globally. It was, however, at the Cairo Conference of 1994 that the linkage between population and development was finally acknowledged.

The mission statement of UNFPA inscribes the laudable goals of contributing to improving the quality of life and stabilizing world population. In the field of population and development, UNFPA provides leadership and advocacy and, above all, helps Governments formulate and implement population policies and programmes. It supports developing countries by providing practical development assistance, forging partnerships and mobilizing resources.

UNFPA has played a remarkable role in helping developing countries and countries with economies in transition to implement population and development strategies. It has also done commendable work in the population census area and in building capacities to collect, process and maintain basic population data in programme countries.

In the implementation of its overall mission, UNFPA recognizes that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent. This is proclaimed in many international instruments, including the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights, the Programmes of Action of the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development and of the World Summit for Social Development and, last but not least, in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The Group of Western European and other States cannot but commend UNFPA for promoting the empowerment of women, gender equality, women's reproductive health and rights and male responsibility. The five-year review of the Cairo Programme of Action showed that almost two thirds of the Member States have already introduced policy or legislative measures to promote equity and equality of women in areas including inheritance, property rights, employment and protection from gender-based violence, such as female genital mutilation.

Among its many significant achievements, UNFPA has helped combat the spread of HIV/AIDS and other, similar diseases, both through its own programmes and

as a sponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

The countries of the Group of Western European and other States are committed to the goals of the Cairo Programme of Action and support the implementation of the Programme of Action and of the key actions identified in the recent five-year review.

I wish to close by thanking in particular Ms. Nafis Sadik, the dynamic Executive Director of UNFPA, for her leadership and wisdom in the sensitive field of population and development. The Group of Western European and other States would also like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to the staff members of UNFPA all over the world for their dedication, hard work and considerable achievements.

The President: I now call on the representative of the United States of America, the host country.

Ms. King (United States of America): Over the past 30 years an unshakable worldwide consensus has emerged that underscores the integral and mutually reinforcing linkages between population and development. For the first time, Governments agreed that family planning, reproductive and sexual health, safe motherhood, healthy newborns, support and guidance for youth and empowerment of women were closely linked to the provision of adequate food, water, education, sanitation, shelter and other primary health services. This new consensus replaced human numbers with human needs, replaced coercion with choices and moved from a demography-centred to a democracy-based approach to stabilizing global population growth. Behind this historic consensus — indeed, acting as the vanguard of the global partnership that has grown out of this consensus — stands the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The United States is proud of the role it played in the founding of UNFPA in 1969. Over these 30 years, the work of UNFPA has been critical in ensuring that women and their families are at the heart of our collective economic, social and political development efforts. UNFPA has taken the lead in expanding access to reproductive health services throughout the world, in recognizing and upholding women's fundamental rights and in forging progress in the critical areas of maternal mortality, family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention.

With UNFPA's support, Governments are doing a better job of meeting the needs of youth by developing and investing in plans that will ensure they will lead healthy and productive lives. Because of UNFPA, Governments are better able to build lasting partnerships with non-governmental organizations; and thanks in large measure to UNFPA's Herculean efforts, we have a plan — the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action — agreed to by 179 Governments, that focuses on meeting the needs of individual women and men and urges the empowerment of women both as a highly important end in itself and as a key to improving the quality of live for everyone.

On behalf of the United States Government, I want to congratulate Ms. Nafis Sadik for her visionary leadership of UNFPA over the past 12 years. She continues to be a tireless champion of reproductive rights around the world. We owe Ms. Sadik and the multitude of UNFPA staff members across the globe a debt of gratitude for all they have done over the past 30 years to place women at the very centre of development. We salute them and wish them all, and UNFPA, many, many happy birthdays to come.

The President: I now call on the representative of Guyana to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/54/L.18.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): I am pleased, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.18 for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

As can be seen from the long list of sponsors, the document enjoys widespread support among member countries of the Group of 77 and other important constituencies within the Assembly. I am pleased to announce that, in addition to the names appearing on the document, the following countries have joined as sponsors: Algeria, Angola, Austria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Cuba, Finland, France, Greece, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, South Africa, Tunisia and Venezuela. And I have no doubt that by the end of this morning there will be many more. This extensive endorsement is by no means surprising, since the underlying purpose of the draft resolution is clear and uncontroversial. Quite simply, it commends the significant achievements of

UNFPA during its three decades of existence in implementing the important areas of its mandate and calls for increased international support in furtherance of its activities in the years to come.

May I just point out that there is a small typographical error appearing in the title: the world "operation" should be in the plural. The error recurs in operative paragraph 1, where the word "operation" should also be made plural.

In formally presenting the draft resolution to the Assembly, it is perhaps apropos to recall that five years ago in Cairo, the international community came together to call for an action programme to address the challenges of population. The result was a set of firm objectives which all States committed themselves to pursue in the interest of a peaceful, healthy and stable world. In demonstration of this commitment, a pledge was made then to try to reach a target of $5.7 million dollars in the year 2000. The outcome of the meeting was a landmark in international cooperation on issues that are admittedly sensitive and susceptible to different perspectives and priorities.

Regrettably, however, as was evident at the special session to review the status of implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, which was held some four months ago with the Ambassador of Bangladesh ably and effectively chairing the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole, it does not appear likely that the targets set will be easily met. Indeed, there is an anticipated shortfall of $3.5 million in contributions, resulting in a reduction of activities to a mere one third of those originally planned. By any yardstick, this cannot be deemed satisfactory.

As a consequence of this financing gap, to take just one example, the target of providing basic education for all children by the year 2015 will elude us. So, too, down the line, as the heads of the multilateral financial institutions have already told us, will the other social targets, the most important of which is to halve global poverty by the year 2015. In the light of this setback, the international community must seriously ask itself whether it is doing enough to address the many social ills that continue to plague it. For to fail to live up to commitments freely given is to place in doubt the value of the hard negotiations in which we continuously engage in the ostensible hope of finding common solutions to common problems.

As the Secretary-General makes clear in his report on the special session contained in document A/54/442 and the recent debate within the Second Committee, population issues are at the heart of sustainable development. Health and education — particularly of women — are prerequisites for the creation of a vibrant and productive society. It is therefore essential that adequate attention and support be given to such important areas of reproductive and sexual health — including the needs of adolescents — as access to needed family planning, planning services, reduction of maternal mortality rates and the creation of education and training services.

The sponsors of draft resolution A/54/L.18 are fully satisfied that the United Nations, more particularly UNFPA, under the enthusiastic and enterprising leadership of Ms. Nafis Sadik, is dedicated to the full implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action. However, to do its job, UNFPA must be provided, as Ms. Sadik reminded us only yesterday, with adequate resources. With a gap of almost $5 billion between the current commitments and the target of some $7 billion set for 2015, UNFPA's future can hardly be said to be fully assured.

On this occasion, therefore, when we meet to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of UNFPA, we should also resolve to honour the obligations undertaken at Cairo. There can be no better birthday gift to UNFPA than a renewed pledge to raise the levels of financial support. With this appeal, I wish to convey to the Fund, its Executive Director and its staff our warmest congratulations and good wishes and to call for the unanimous adoption of draft resolution A/54/L.18, which formally places on record the Assembly's appreciation of the great work being done by the Fund in the cause of development.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.18, entitled "Thirtieth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund".

Since the introduction of the draft resolution, Brazil and Cyprus have joined the list of sponsors.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.18?

Draft resolution A/54/L.18 was adopted (resolution 54/11).

The Assembly has thus concluded the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the operations of the United Nations Population Fund and this stage of its consideration of sub-item (h) of agenda item 99.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.